

Towards the Empowerment Model: A Case Study of Blackfoot Documentation and Revitalization

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Empowerment Model

- “Research *on, for, and with* subjects”
(Cameron et al. 1992:22-24)
- The focus is to do work that is beneficial to all;
not only **for** community members, but also
with them (Rice 2006:132)

Case Studies of Empowerment

- David Wilkins (1992)
 - Created a grammar of Mparntwe Arrernte
 - Dissertation topic overlapped with questions that members of the community proposed
 - Worked with community members to answer those questions
- Raquel-María Yamada (2007)
 - Aretyry Kari'nja speech community in Suriname
 - Previous linguistic work largely inaccessible to speakers (language of publication, academic nature of publications)
 - The Cassava Film
- Tonya Stebbins (2012)
 - Details work with two different language communities (Sm'algyax, Mali Baining), highlighting the difficulties of balancing community needs with academic expectations and notions of identity

More Case Studies of Empowerment

- Deborah Cameron, Elizabeth Frazer, Penelope Harvey, Ben Rampton, and Kay Richardson (1993)
- Hinton & Hale (eds. 2001)

Understanding Empowerment

- “Just what this [empowerment model] means cannot be uniquely identified – there is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model, as different situations call for different types of interactions” (Rice 2006:150)
- A collaborative methodological framework is equipped to meet community needs (Yamada 2007, cf. Rice 2006:148)

Our View of Empowerment

- On-going relationship-building process
 - For linguistic research in general
 - Focuses on meeting the needs of community members
 - Best accomplished through direct collaboration with community members

Presentation Goal

To show an example of ...

How a collaborative working environment:

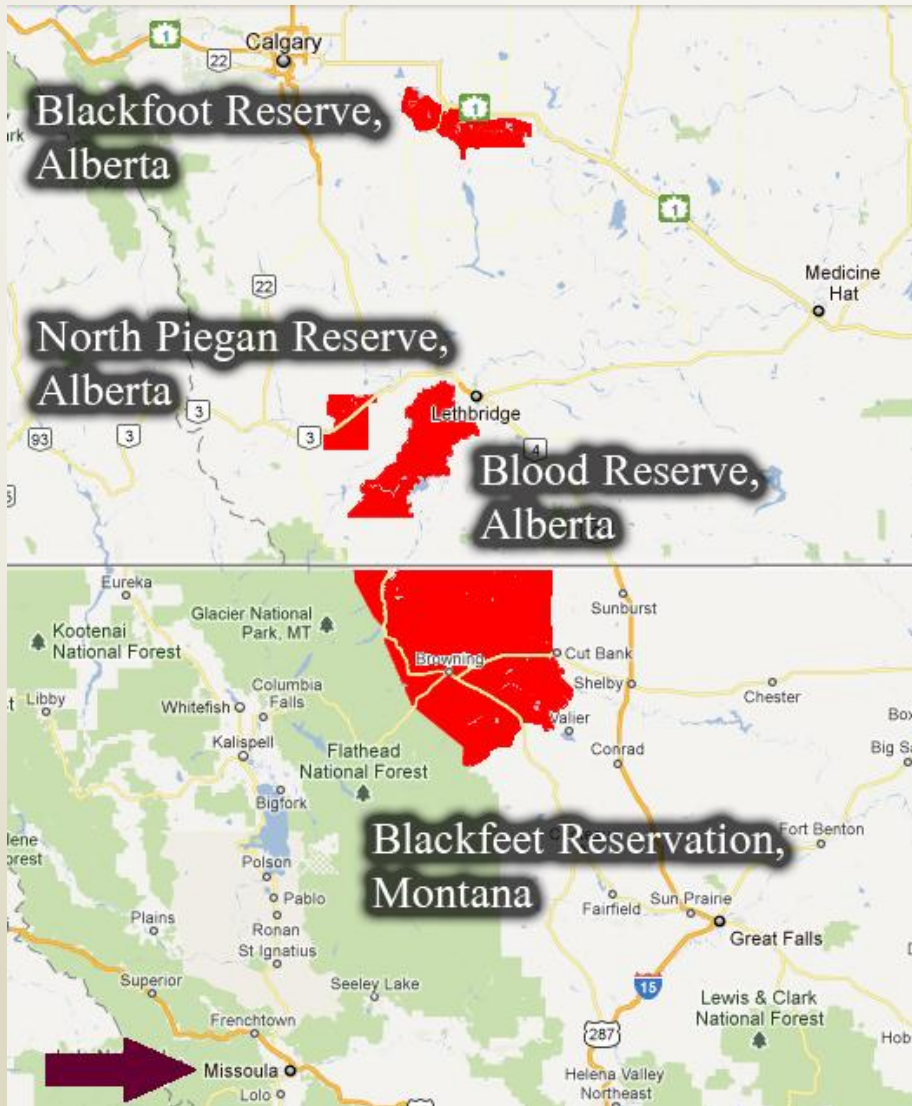
- builds a relationship between linguists and Blackfoot members
- benefits all collaboration members
 - Meeting community members' needs
 - Providing experience to graduate students

Project Members

- Mizuki Miyashita
- Jackelyn Van Buren
- S. Scott Schupbach
- Rebecca Yares
- Annabelle Chatsis
- Megan Lunak



Blackfoot Language Background

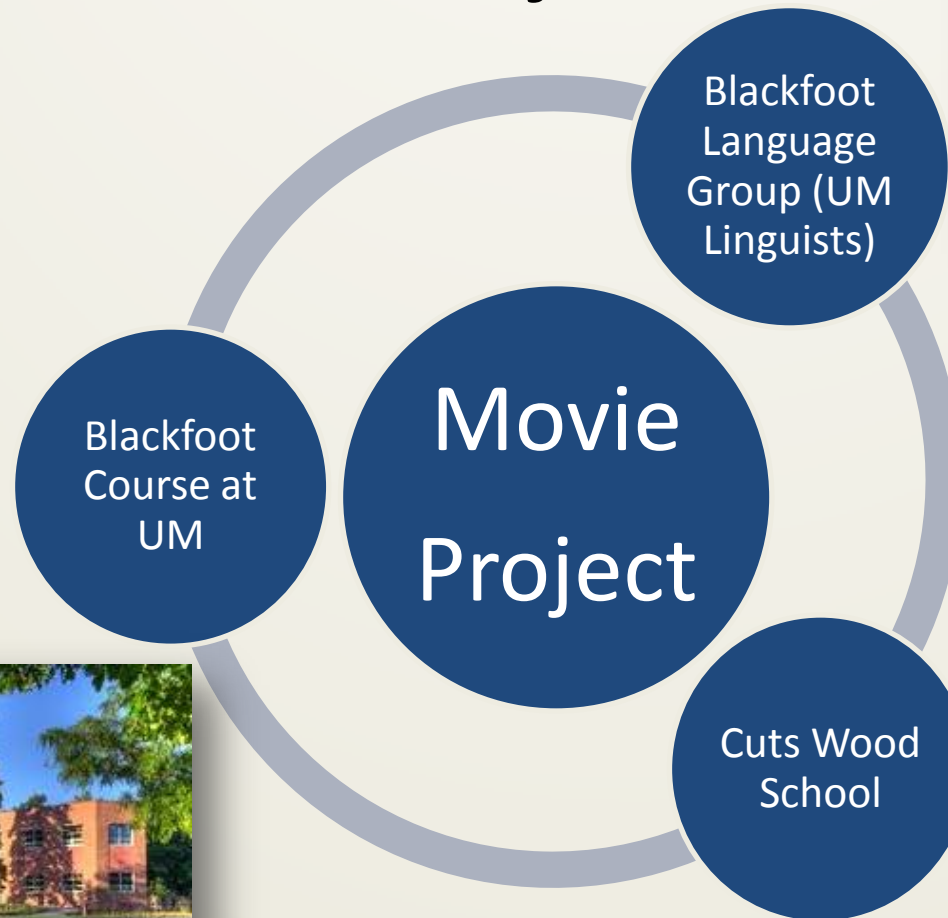


- Algonquian family
- Spoken in
 - northern Montana
 - southern Alberta
- Speaker population
 - Alberta: $\approx 3,200$ speakers*
 - Average speaker age >50
 - Montana: ≈ 50 speakers**
 - Average speaker age >80

*2011 Canadian Census

** Darrell Kipp, p.c.

Groups Involved in Collaborative Project



Cuts Wood School



- K-8 Blackfoot Immersion
 - Founded under Piegan Institute(Kipp 2000)
 - Two classes (approx. 24 students total)
- Megan Lunak's classroom enhancement ideas (co-author; teacher at Cuts Wood School)
 - To adopt new **digital** & accessible materials
 - To include more **verb-oriented** lesson





U of MT Blackfoot Class

- Language Learning Course
 - Heritage language learners & traditional students
 - Ratio varies depending on the year
 - Heritage learners include parents who want their children to learn Blackfoot
- Annabelle Chatsis's classroom enhancement ideas (co-author; Blackfoot instructor at UM)
 - To include more ***interactive*** learning methods
 - To adopt additional structured/detailed ***lesson plans***

Blackfoot Language Group

Create materials for Blackfoot linguistics research and language teaching (2007-present)

- Online Audio-Vocabulary (2007-2009)

- with Piegan Institute

- Picture book (2010-2011)

- with Blackfoot teacher

- **Animated Movie Project**

- with Blackfoot instructor & Cuts Wood School teacher
- Importance of having teachers as members:
they know what is beneficial in the classroom the most

Process of Movie Creation

- Culturally appropriate stories
- Blackfoot phrase composition
- Discussion with instructors
- Designing and editing animation
- Conducting voice recording

Culturally Appropriate Stories

- Jackelyn Van Buren and Rebecca Yares
 - Co-wrote the story
 - Goal of the story was to create learning through repetition of phrases
 - What is he doing?
 - Hello, my name is...
 - Another aim was to show singular and plural endings
 - Present and past tense forms

Blackfoot Phrase Composition

- Jackelyn Van Buren (Linguistics graduate student)
- Storyline development
 - Teach several structures as a sequence (i.e. using one animated portion to teach verbal morphology of tense and aspect)
 - Person & Number with different characters

Discussion with Annabelle Chatsis

- Content
 - Cultural sensitivity
 - *sipisttoo* 'owl' is a symbol of death
 - *kiaayo* 'bear' is a taboo word in some societies
- Structure
 - Pragmatics and semantics
 - *Po'kiiyoot!* 'come with me' (instead of 'Let's go!')
 - *Óki níkso'koaawa* 'Hello my relatives' for greeting in the beginning of stories. (Frantz)



Designing and Editing Animation

- Rebecca Yares (grad student in 2010-2012)
 - 5 animal characters (designed by Sara Schroeder, a former linguistics student)
 - Created a short animated video
 - Pictures - colorful scenes that can be used for constructing various descriptions in Blackfoot

Conducting Voice Recording

- Cuts Wood School
 - Megan Lunak selected students for characters
 - Megan and Rebecca collaborated in revising the scripts with more colloquial forms
 - Students are the voice actors
 - Becky overlaid the sound into the movie



Cuts Wood School Voice Actors



Naatosikkanasoyaki
(Summer Kennerly)



Ponokanna
(Trae Kennerly)



Makoyiistakiaakii
(Leissa Wolf Mountain
Woman)

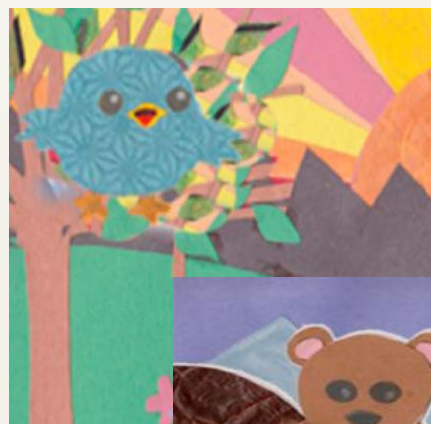
Katoyissaakii
(Justine Mombery)



Aakaikakatosaki
(Treyace Wellman)

Summary of the Story

- An elk is walking through the forest and sees 4 animals:
 - a bird
 - two beavers
 - a mouse
- The animals do not see the elk but they tell the audience what they are doing
 - the bird is cold and flying south
 - the beavers are building a home
 - the mouse is swimming across the river



Sample Movie



Classroom Enhancement Ideas

- Cuts Wood School
 - To adopt new ***digital*** and accessible materials
 - To include more ***verb-oriented*** lessons
- UM Blackfoot Class
 - To include more ***interactive*** learning methods
 - To adopt additional structured/detailed ***lesson plans***



Application: Cuts Wood School

- Megan Lunak & Rebecca Yares

- With the movie

- Watch the movie
- Describe scenes (comprehension)
- Role playing (with scripts), etc...



- Gesture game

- *áíkiwatsiksi?* ‘What is he/she doing?’
 - *áíhpiyiwa* ‘she is dancing’
 - *kitáíhpiyihpa* ‘are you dancing?’
 - *aa, nitáíhpiyi* ‘yes, I am dancing’
 - *kitáíkiihpa* ‘what are you doing?’

- Digital material & focus more on verbs



Classroom Enhancement Ideas

- Cuts Wood School
 - To include more *verb-oriented* lessons
 - To adopt new *digital* and accessible materials
- UM Blackfoot Class
 - To include more *interactive* learning methods
 - To adopt additional structured/detailed *lesson plans*



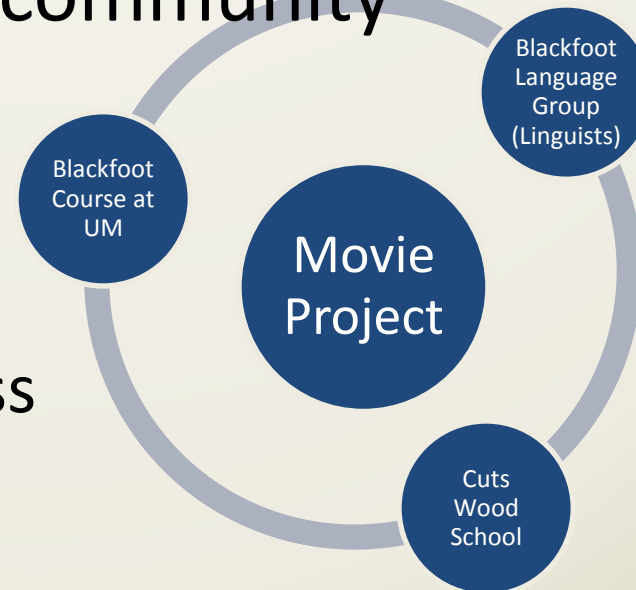
Application: Blackfoot Class (Fall 2012)

- Annabelle Chatsis and Scott Schupbach
 - Annabelle requested a sample lesson plan which Scott designed
 - Annabelle used the lesson plan to explore some of the video's potential instructional uses
 - Focused on extended content
 - Naming items not in the text
 - Naming colors
 - Counting objects
 - ***Interactive content & lesson plans***



Empowerment Model Benefits

- Relationship-building process
- For linguistic research
- Meeting needs of community members
 - including guidance during application process



Blackfoot Language Teachers



Cuts Wood
School

- Experience first-hand the usefulness of materials
- Learn practical applications of linguistic knowledge toward language teaching goals
- Have the basis for implementing the experience in their own lesson planning



UM Blackfoot
Class

Blackfoot Language Students

- Cuts Wood School
 - Those involved enjoyed being part of the project
 - Others want to be involved in future projects
 - Raised awareness of how they can help revive their language
 - Excited that the project was done in their language
- College Language Course
 - Enjoyed having new material to work with
 - Students who are parents were encouraged to speak and read to their children in Blackfoot

Linguists

- Researcher/Mentor
 - Building long-term relationship with Blackfoot community members
 - Convey the value of “empowerment” method to graduate students and community members
- Graduate Students
 - Practical experience outside of coursework
 - Enhances collaboration skills
 - Research relationship
 - Scott and Annabelle (2012-2013) on Blackfoot demonstratives
 - Establishing an organization in language revitalization
 - Rebecca Yares (2013)
 - Native Teaching Aids (www.nativeteachingaids.com)
 - Emphasis of the organization is **collaboration**

References

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